

The Prairie Light Review

Volume 2 | Number 1

Article 39

Fall 12-10-1982

Untitled

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College of DuPage

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Recommended Citation

Briskey, Robert J. (1982) "Untitled," *The Prairie Light Review*: Vol. 2 : No. 1 , Article 39.
Available at: <https://dc.cod.edu/plr/vol2/iss1/39>

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The Porch

*Ah, for the warmth of the old wooden porch
Running some forty feet or more,
From end to end across the house,
With wooden planks to form the floor.*

*My folks would sit and tell me tales
Of knights slaying dragons and the such,
Or giants and bean stalks and golden eggs
As we'd sit in the swing that I liked so much.*

*Later on, when I was six or seven,
I'd snatch up cookies that Mom would bake
And hide out underneath that porch
And stuff myself till my stomach would ache.*

*Then there were times when my friends and I
Would play cowboys and Indians and wagon wheels,
And pretend that the trellises were the spokes
And the steps to the porch were the horses' heels.*

*I remember once around Halloween
We set up a spook house under the porch.
Oh, it was dark with blankets o'er the side
and we pretended a flashlight was a torch.*

*And then I reached that middle age
When boys would learn of something new;
Something soft and gentler than he,
Mine was a girl all dressed in blue.*

*We'd sit for hours upon that porch
And talk about the silliest things,
Or holding hands, say nothing at all
While gently swining in the old porch swing.*

*I reached the age of khaki clothes.
With my duffle bag and leather grip
I waved from the gate to the folks on the porch
And noticed a tear and Mom's quivering lip.*

*But I'd signed my name on the bottom line
And had a duty I must fulfill.
I'd see that porch again, I knew
when my time was up, but not until.*

*Hooray, that day had finally come.
Let bugles blare and the flag unfurl,
For there on the porch with Mom and Dad
Was my sweetheart, that blue clad girl.*

*And shortly after my return
We sat in the swing as in days gone by,
And I asked her if she would take my name.
Why, she was so happy she started to cry.*

*So we were wed and settled down
To a cozy porch of our very own,
With a house attached across its back
And white picket rail with steps leading down.*

*It wasn't long and I was forced to build
A gate to close in front of those stairs
After our little boy nearly tumbled down
And my missu and I realized our fears.*

*But pretty soon he was in control
And off he'd dash to gather his chums.
Then under the porch they'd disappear.
The porch was a bridge for railroad bums.*

*Rather strange, but it happened that very day
That a whole cherry pie found a place to hide.
He didn't know where the pie had gone,
But his tummy was hurting him inside.*

*Yes, I watched him play and I watched him grow
And I watched him court a girl in blue.
They didn't see me in the window pane
And I smiled when they stole a kiss or two.*

*So today they brought my grandson by.
He's four years old and likes to play
Upon, beneath, and around the porch
Just as my son and I in our youthful day.*

Arthur W. Johnson

